



**MSCP 2002 Annual
Report Workshop**

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County of San Diego - Parks and Open Space Program

Contributing to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan Environment Initiative

"Promote natural resource management strategies that ensure environmental preservation, quality of life, and economic development"

**Bob Asher, Chief of
the County MSCP
Retires**

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NORTH COUNTY MSCP SUBAREA PLAN UPDATE



Tom Oberbauer (right) explaining North County MSCP Map

Since March 2000, the MSCP has been working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and other stakeholders, to develop a draft map for the North County MSCP.

A complementary planning effort currently underway is a study of vernal pools in Ramona funded by a \$75,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.



Vernal Pool in Ramona

This map has received input at many outreach meetings and as a result has gone through several revisions. The current working draft map is Version 4.1 and is available for review on the County's MSCP Portal Website or on the SanGIS website at www.sangis.org where you can purchase a full-size version for \$20. This map is currently being analyzed by the USFWS and CDFG to determine if coverage for approximately 70 plant and animal species is provided.

Plan text is being drafted and is anticipated to be completed and available for public review by November 2003. Staff anticipates requesting Board of Supervisors approval of the draft plan map and text for the purpose of proceeding with the preparation of a combined Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report in December 2003.

The North County MSCP will include the following elements:

- An overview of the plan's purpose and planning process,
- A description of the study area,
- An explanation of how the preserve will be assembled,
- Policies that will ensure proper plan implementation,
- Guidelines for compatible land uses,
- Preserve management and monitoring guidelines, and
- Financial guidelines for habitat acquisition and management.



RECEIVE MSCP NEWS BY E-MAIL OR VIEW ONLINE

In an effort to conserve our natural resources, we would like to update our mailing distribution list. To receive future issues of MSCP News by email or view it on our website, send an email to MSCP@sdcounty.ca.gov by October 1st. Please include your name as shown on your mailing label.



HAVE YOU MOVED?

Please send us your name, organization and new address. Please include your name as shown on your mailing label.



17TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY



The County of San Diego MSCP was honored to be invited to participate at the 17th Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology Program that took place in Duluth, Minnesota from June 28 – July 2, 2003. More than 1,200 people from 44 countries attended the conference to participate in an exchange of scientifically based conservation concepts.

The County of San Diego's contingent consisted of several members, including Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Robert Copper; Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, Brian Albright; Environmental Resource Manager, Mark Webb; MSCP Chief, Robert Asher; Environmental Resource Manager, Thomas Oberbauer and Environmental Management Specialist, Maeve Hanley. Consultants working on the North San Diego County Subarea Plan who also attended included Scott Fleury of Technology Associates International Corp (TAIC) and Wayne Spencer of the Conservation Biology Institute (CBI).



Scott Fleury of TAIC presented Use of Reserve Selection Algorithm Modeling in Creation of Preserve System for Regional Conservation and, along with Robert Asher, Thomas Oberbauer and Wayne Spencer, Reserve Selection Algorithm Modeling Using Predictive Sensitive Species Modeling as a Tool for Preserve Design in San Diego County. An organized discussion with interested conference participants took place after the presentation.

Robert Copper and Robert Asher gave presentations on Special Area Management Plans (SAMP)/Watershed Planning as Integrated Tools in San Diego County followed by another organized discussion.

Thomas Oberbauer gave the final talk, an oral presentation on the Predictive Sensitive Species Modeling in San Diego County.

Robert Copper and Robert Asher also presented a poster of SAMPs poster focusing on watershed planning in San Diego County. The poster contains an aerial graphic of



Robert Asher, Tom Oberbauer & Scott Fleury (TAIC) attend the 17th Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology "Conservation of Land and Water Interactions."

San Diego County, graphics of the Otay Watershed, photographs of fauna of concern in the Otay Watershed and text on all aspects of SAMP development as an integrated regulatory tool for the Otay Watershed in San Diego County.

Other familiar faces from San Diego that attended the conference included Wayne Spencer, Mike White and Jerre Stallcup of CBI. Wayne presented data regarding the Stephen's Kangaroo Rat translocation project at the Ramona Airport. You can view the powerpoint presentations on the MSCP Portal website by clicking on the Public Outreach link.





MSCP ANNUAL REPORT PUBLIC WORKSHOP



Presenters (from left): Tom Oberbauer (County of San Diego, MSCP); Marisa Lundstedt (City of Chula Vista); Cory Linder (County of San Diego, Parks and Open Space); Bill Tippets (CDFG); Susan Wynn (USFWS); Keith Greer (City of San Diego) and Robin Stribley (City of San Diego). Not pictured: Jim Lyon (City of Poway).

The MSCP held its annual public workshop at the Lakeside Community Center on August 7, 2003. Staff from the Department of the Interior represented by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the County of San Diego, the Cities of Chula Vista, Poway and San Diego jointly conducted the workshop.

Each agency or jurisdiction gave a presentation on its conservation activities during the reporting period from January 1, 2002 to December 31, 2002. The presentations focused on management and monitoring activities, as well as acquisitions and the status of the preserve system.

The Wildlife Agencies (USFWS, CDFG) and BLM gave a joint presentation that highlighted monitoring and management during the last three years. Efforts included monitoring of the California gnatcatcher, the Light-footed clapper rail, the California least tern, the Southwestern pond turtle, the Arroyo southwestern toad, the Orange-throated whip-tail, raptors, wildlife corridors and much more.

The County of San Diego highlighted the status of its preserve system and recent acquisitions in Wrights Field, Iron Mountain, Lakeside Linkage and the Tijuana River Valley. Management and monitoring efforts being undertaken by the County include a fire management plan for San Vicente Highlands, rare plant surveys, Quino checkerspot butterfly surveys, Lakeside Linkage bird surveys, bat surveys and surveys for toads and turtles. The County also recognized the numerous outreach activities in which the MSCP Outreach Committee has organized and participated, mentioned the debut of the County's MSCP Portal website and gave an update on the status of the North County MSCP Subarea Plan.

The City of Chula Vista informed the public that its take permit is still pending; however, its Subarea plan is complete and has been adopted by the City Council. The City of Chula Vista's Subarea Plan is the only one of the current plans that includes coverage of Quino.

The City of Poway updated the public on the status of its preserve as well as its management and monitoring activities including biological surveys, fire management, erosion control and habitat restoration and revegetation.

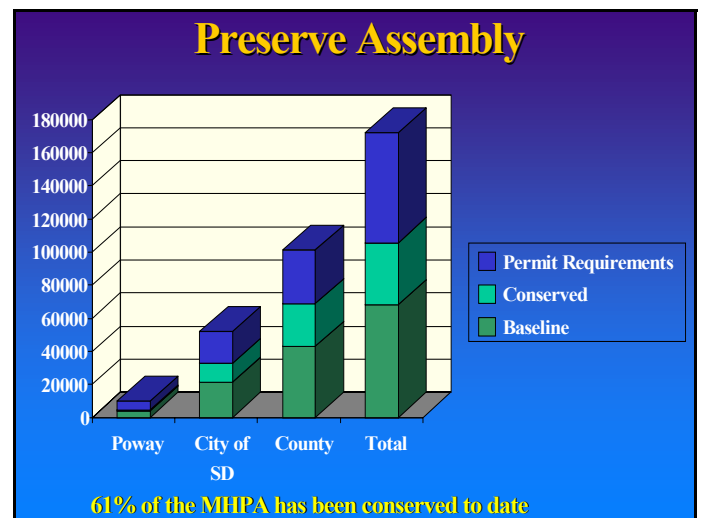
The City of San Diego spoke to the public about the status of its preserve system as well as five key acquisition targets. The City of San Diego also highlighted several management and monitoring efforts, including a Vernal Pool management plan, enhancement and restoration projects, Marron Valley remote sensing of habitat quality and monitoring of sensitive plants, burrowing owls, raptors, Quino and more.



Curious Pond Turtle, courtesy of USGS

The MSCP preserve system has been very successful since its inception in 1997. As of December 31, 2002, 61% of the entire MSCP preserve system has been conserved. Within the County's portion of the MSCP preserve system, 58% (57,233 acres) has been preserved through acquisition, mitigation from developments and baseline preserve. More information on this can be found in the County of San Diego MSCP 2002 Annual Report.

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TEXAS INTERNS APPRECIATE QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN DIEGO



Yolaine Stout of the Back Country Land Trust shares the history of Wright's Field in Alpine

Robert Copper, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of the Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG), engaged eight graduate students from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin and the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University to work as interns in several LUEG departments this past summer. The interns worked

on projects dealing with high-level policy issues ranging from evaluating Migratory Bird Treaty Act regulations and impacts on development projects to conducting a cost analysis of the Air Pollution Control District's Total Quality Management program for different land development processes. In addition to their individual projects, the interns also participated in a series of training modules given by County staff to help them better understand San Diego County policy-making. According to Stuart Scruggs, the training modules gave him a "good sense of the 'big picture' of County operations".

Although none of the interns worked directly on the MSCP, many expressed an interest in learning more about this program. What better way than to join MSCP staff on a tour of some of the County's beautiful parks and open space preserves. As a major objective of the Environment Initiative of the County's Strategic Plan, it was a natural way for them to appreciate why the MSCP is so important to the quality of life of San Diego residents.

On July 18, 2003, MSCP staff guided the interns on an "EcoTour". The first stop was Wright's Field in Alpine. Yolaine Stout, Director of the Wright's Field Project for the Back Country Land Trust (BCLT), led the group on a brief walk through this preserve. Wright's Field is significant not only because it contains five of California's most endangered habitats, but it also contains many prehistoric and historic features. This combination of biology and history serves as the perfect outdoor classroom to students at Joan McQueen Middle School. To learn more about Wright's Field and BCLT, visit www.bclt.org.

After a brief stop at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, the group continued through the historic town of Julian to Volcan Mountain. The interns spent the afternoon atop Volcan participating in activities, including a hike and owl pellet dissection. Like Wright's Field, Volcan Mountain is both biologically and historically important. Indigenous peoples living there were hunters and gatherers, and Volcan's di-

verse landscape provided them with an abundance of food. However, their way of life began to change when Spanish and Mexican colonizers arrived. Objects including a rock wall (below) were left behind and serve as evidence of their occupation of Volcan. Susan Cary, Executive Director, introduced the group to the Volcan Mountain Preserve Foundation (VMPF). One of its missions is to assure that "people may continue to be refreshed and inspired by the presence of wild, open space". In 1989, VMPF and the County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) established the Volcan Mountain Wilderness Preserve, which is open to the public 7-days-a-week. To learn more about VMPF, visit www.volcanmt.org. Park Rangers from DPR gave two presentations. Jeff Rundell discussed the impacts to Volcan from fire as well as restoration efforts that have been made since last year's Pines Fire.



Melinda Taini brought several live specimens and led a hands-on discussion about native snakes of California.

The final stop of the day was the San Dieguito River Park (SDRP). Some trails are currently open to the public in the Lake Hodges and San Pasqual Valley vicinities. When the Coast to Crest Trail is complete, it will traverse almost the entire 55-mile length of the SDRP — from the coast of Del Mar to the deserts of Anza Borrego. For more information about SDRP please visit their website at www.sdrp.org.

The EcoTour was a wonderful hands-on MSCP experience for the interns. Melissa Forbes enthusiastically praised the day's activities, "The entire tour was fabulous! It was an amazing learning experience, and it gave me an even greater appreciation for the important work County employees do in the area of land conservation."



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In addition to the presentations, the Wildlife Agencies and each jurisdiction provided displays. The MSCP Outreach Committee also had a display, and the United States Geological Survey brought their pond turtles. To view the County of San Diego MSCP 2002 Annual Report or Public Workshop Power Point presentation, please feel free to visit the MSCP Portal Website at www.mscp-sandiego.org. For a hardcopy or CD of the County and City of San Diego's Annual Reports, the County's management and monitoring reports and the PowerPoint presentation, or to be added to the mailing list for next year's Annual Report Public Workshop, please email mscp@sdcounty.ca.gov.



BOB ASHER — MSCP LEADER RETIRES OCTOBER 30, 2003



Our Leader—Bob Asher

Robert Asher, Chief of the County MSCP, has announced he is retiring on October 30, 2003. As one of the pioneers of the San Diego MSCP, Bob guided the Wildlife Agencies, landowners, environmental groups, the agricultural community and elected officials during the formation of the award-winning MSCP. Bob began his career with the County in 1971 as an Associate Planner. He lead many efforts including, long-range planning, Geographic Information Systems and transportation planning. He assisted with the preparation of the first Open Space and Conservation Elements of the County's General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. Needless to say, we will miss Bob's untiring leadership and commitment to the planning and implementation of the MSCP.



From Left: Planning Director Gary Pryor and Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Robert Copper with Bob

NOTABLE QUOTES:

Bob Asher is a person of many talents and skills, and he is a person who uses these talents and skills well in pursuit of that which is right and righteous. He and I joke that there are only a handful of people in the County who understand MSCP (or would want to) and that at any one moment we're not sure it is us. The truth, of course, is that he has led the effort all the way.

The people of this County owe Bob a great deal, and while names and faces fade over time, our permanent open space preserve will not. If you know Bob, you know he sees the accomplishment itself as adequate reward in and of itself. He has had the opportunity to be part of great things, and has shown he is more than up to the challenge. While I'm sad to lose my partner, traveling compan-

ion and at times alter-ego on issues, this retirement can't happen to a nicer person.

*Robert R. Copper, County of San Diego
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Land Use and Environment Group*

"Bob's contributions to the Department of Planning and Land Use and its customers have been invaluable. We are sure to continue our success in the future based on his efforts in the past. For those of you who know Bob, when he gets stress he tilts. Notice of late, no tilting, only smiles!

*Gary L. Pryor, Director, County of San Diego
Department of Planning and Land Use*

"I have always admired Bob's ability to immediately understand complex issues and transfer that knowledge so clearly to others."

*Tom Oberbauer, Environmental Resource Manager
County of San Diego MSCP*

"When Bob offered me the opportunity to work on the MSCP, I knew it would be a wonderful experience — a chance to work on an environmentally significant project with wonderful people — an appealing prospect."

*Trish Boaz, Environmental Resource Manager
County of San Diego MSCP*

"It's a rare combination of qualities in a person, but Bob is someone who is both practical and creative. If an idea has merit, Bob will work far outside the box to assure a fair hearing."

Jim Whalen, J. Whalen & Associates

"Bob is one of those rare individuals who tends to look beyond the status quo and set his sights on uncharted territory. As a result, Bob has been instrumental in placing San Diego County at the forefront nationally of innovative environmental and natural resource stewardship."

Marc Ebbin, Ebbin, Moser + Skaggs, LLP

"Bob's calm but determined demeanor is one that helped steady the frenzy during the creation of these cutting edge plans and kept the process and projects on track with an even keel. Bob helped ensure a brighter future that preserves the uniqueness of this special place we all, critters included, call home. Thank you Bob."

Karen Scarborough





HIGHLIGHTED VEGETATION COMMUNITY: COASTAL SAGE SCRUB

*Laurel sumac*

Coastal sage scrub (CSS) is a vegetation community that consists predominantly of low growing, aromatic and generally soft-leaved plants. Many of these plants are deciduous, which means that they will lose their leaves entirely during periods of dryness (summer and autumn).

The plants will appear as dead bundles only to spring back to life with green foliage during the rainy season.

CSS was originally the dominant vegetation in San Diego County. Today, nearly 70% of its original area has been lost and much of what remains exists in small patches of

isolated habitat. It can be found mostly on south and west facing slopes from Camp Pendleton to the lower slopes of Palomar Mountain and around Escondido, the San Pasqual Valley, El Cajon and Jamul to the area surrounding Otay Mountain. The MSCP aims to protect CSS habitat because it contains a variety of rare and endangered plant and animal species. Among the many MSCP covered species that make CSS habitat their home are the California gnatcatcher, California rufous-crowned sparrow, Orange-throated whiptail and San Diego horned lizard.

*California towhee*

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Multiple Species Conservation Program

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